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CAROL MURPHREE
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 District 4
 Republican Primary
 Tuesday, May 24
Pd. Pol Adv. By: Carol Murphree • 414 Ardmore Circle, Russellville, AL, 35653

Russellville, Belgreen Scholars' Bowl teams earn Class 5A, 1A state titles

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Last year, it was Russellville and Phil Campbell High Schools both bringing home blue maps in baseball.

One small county. Two state champions. And it's happened again.

Earlier this month, the Russellville High School Scholars' Bowl team won the 2022 5A Alabama Scholastic Competition Association (ASCA) championship. At that same state competition, Belgreen High School's Scholars' Bowl team won the Class 1A championship.

Again, one small county. Two state champions.

The ASCA sponsors the annual Alabama Scholastic Challenge in

which teams from across the state compete for the championship. Both teams advanced from the February District I and II tournaments to compete in the April 8th state competition.

Belgreen's team of Landen Etherington, Alyssa Betts, Quentin Durrett, Carlos Garcia and Kyle Hawkins were undefeated at the District tournament, going 4-0. They finished fourth in the State Division II Competition, which consists of 1A-4A classifications.

Coach Mary Motes' team won the 1A state title by finishing with the highest score among all 1A schools who took part in the state tournament.

Durrett was also named to the

See 'TITLES,' page 3

Russellville Electric Board votes itself raise, refuses to answer questions from citizens on agenda

John Pilati
 Franklin Free Press

Silence.

One by one, the three Russellville residents who appeared on the agenda at the April 19, 2022, Russellville Electric Board meeting addressed General Manager Charles Canida and the board.

Each citizen had legitimate concerns and questions. They came to get answers. Instead, all they received was silence, as Canida and the board never responded to any question, nor gave any feedback to any concern raised by Gary Blackburn, Florence Randolph or Sascha Franklin.

What the board did do, though, was vote itself a raise. By a 3-2 margin

(with board members Chad Wells and Nick Willis voting 'No'), the raise, which takes effect in May, was approved. Board member Bill Jackson made the motion, and James McDuffa and Leamon Mosley voted to approve it.

This means McDuffa, as chairman, will now be paid \$750 per meeting, and board members will receive \$600/month, raising their annual income to the maximum allowed by the Code of Alabama, \$7,200. McDuffa will be paid at least \$9,000 annually, and will receive an additional \$750 for any special called meetings.

In February, four board members paid back \$28,000 in illegal 'performance and incentive' bonuses they


See 'RAISE,' page 9

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CURTIS BAKER
 Board of Education, District 2
 May 24, 2022
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Pd. Pol. Adv. By: Curtis Baker • 322 Austen Dr, Phil Campbell, AL

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Mary Lee Bendall, 82, of Russellville, passed away on
Wednesday, April 20th. Interment at Franklin Memory
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Martha Ann Farmer McDougal, 82, of Phil Campbell,
passed away on Sunday, April 17th. Interment at Glendale
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The Franklin County Commission is accepting applications for the following position(s):

Corrections Officer/Dispatchers

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on
Friday, April 29, 2022.

An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin
County Commission Office, located at 405 N Jackson Avenue, Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM or
applications are available at www.franklincountyal.org under the Careers tab.

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JOE FIKE SHERIFF

Republican Primary May 24

My name is Joe Fike. I am the Republican candidate
for Sheriff of Franklin County.

I started my twenty-year career as a jailer in 2000. I was quickly
promoted to sergeant and supervised the daily operation at the
Lawrence County Jail. I became A.P.O.S.T. certified at Jacksonville
State University. I was the Drug Awareness Resistance Education
(DARE) Officer in Lawrence County, and worked for Town Creek and
Courtland PD, where I was promoted to Assistant Chief.

I was appointed Police Chief in 2017 by the Town of Phil Campbell. I
served the town in many roles, from Police Chief to Town Safety
Officer, and occasionally rode the garbage truck. Leadership is about
serving others and helping others around you rise.

I have operated a business for 16 years and understand what it takes to
recruit and retain quality employees.

I am a Conservative Christian, and as Sheriff, I will be fair and impartial,
and free from prejudice. I have grown a robust understanding while
working in the correctional system and serving small communities to
reason and be empathetic and compassionate while carrying out daily
duties in these positions. I serve on the Franklin County Farmers
Federation Board of Directors, the Phil Campbell Housing Authority,
and the Franklin County Republican Executive Committee.

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‘TITLES,’ from page 1

Division II All-Tournament Team for his outstanding performance at the state competition.

Russellville's team is coached by Susan DeArman. The students, Dalton Stults, Grace McDermitt, Maddy Green, Noah Harville, Gabe Amick, Grayson Murray, Damien Tompkins and Steven McCormick, defeated schools in larger classifications during their competition season, including Muscle Shoals, Decatur, Austin and Florence High Schools. Russellville defeated West Point High School in the championship to advance to the state tour-

nament.

RHS finished as the Class 5A champion in the Division I Competition, which included schools classified from 5A-7A.

Both teams were honored April 18th with resolutions approved by the Franklin County Commission. Students attended the meeting and received copies of the resolutions.

RHS alumnus Christopher Arthur serves as President-Elect of ASCA. DeArman is a High School Board Member as is retired Russellville teacher Sharon Daily.



COURTESY PHOTOS

The Russellville High School Scholars' Bowl team (top photo) won the 5A state championship held at Jefferson State Community College while the Belgreen High School Scholars' Bowl team (bottom photo) won the 1A state championship.

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, be sure and visit us online at www.franklinfreepress.net!

Letter to the editor...

Submitted to the FFP

Unless you are active on Facebook, you probably did not know that a GIRLS' team sport at Russellville High School was the State runner-up for the AHSAA 4A-5A State championship in Mobile last week. That's right, the RHS Girls' Tennis Team won the Red Map for finishing 2nd in the State, a huge accomplishment in any sport. There was little to no media coverage or other acknowledgements for this highest finish and first map trophy in any girls' team sport at RHS since 1978 (when RHS Girls' Volleyball won a State Championship). After attending the 2 day state playoff, I can tell you, this is not a minor accomplishment. In the 4A-5A division alone there were 18 different high schools who had qualified as either Region Champions or Region Runner-ups from their region of the State. Eight of these schools were private schools where tennis is the primary Spring sport for girls, are very well funded, and have the advantage of being able to recruit outstanding players. To finish 2nd in the State is truly an amazing and unbelievable accomplishment for the RHS tennis program.

So onto the greatest secret at RHS, RHS Varsity Tennis Coach Charlotte Dollar. Coaching girls sports is a very difficult job. It takes a very special person to balance the discipline to get high school girls to practice and play at their top level and to have the compassion and love to counsel the girls when they are doubting themselves or having a meltdown. Coach Dollar's ability to do just that is absolutely amazing. She instills loyalty in her players that make them want to play for her at their highest level because they are afraid they will disappoint her. They appear to think of her as a second mom and love playing for her. She is an outstanding example who holds the girls accountable when they say or do something that is not in line with the standards she establishes for her tennis program. She prays with the girls, laughs with them, scolds and encourages them and whatever else they need from her. If you look at the athletic abilities of the girls she coaches and compare them to that of the other schools at the State tournament, you would think RHS would finish near the bottom. However, the results on the court speak for themselves. Her teams have finished in third place and second place the last

SEE 'LETTER,' page 8

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Correction Policy

The *Franklin Free Press* strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

Letters to the editor

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hometown people, for hometown people.

We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The *Franklin Free Press* reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

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What's Happening

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EVENTS OF INTEREST • FAMILY REUNIONS • PLAYS • CHURCH GATHERINGS • EDUCATIONAL • CLUB MEETINGS

O Osborn Hill Cemetery -Decoration Day will be on May 7, 2022. The first Saturday of May has been observed as Decoration Day for well over 100 years. All old flowers will need to be removed off the graves. Please make plans for that special day to come to the cemetery. Also its time again for annual donations. If you would like to donate to the Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, please send your donations to: Osborn Hill Cemetery Fund, c/o Mrs. Lana Duncan 2330 Colburn Mtn. Road, Tuscumbia, AL 35674.

B Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, 305 Bethlehem Road, Russellville, has changed its Decoration Day to the first Sunday in May. This year that date will be Sunday, May 1st.

Recall LaGrange's Distillery Raid on the Mountain will include a period-correct, living history event centering on a Prohibition Era Raid on a "suspected moonshine still." A group of lawmen will descend on the pioneer village of LaGrange and will engage in a brief skirmish with the locals. The skirmish will be held at 2PM on Saturday, May 7 at the College Site Park. Living history presentations will be ongoing throughout the day and also tours of the near-by Dawson Distillery earlier in the day. Craft Vendors and Tours of the LaGrange's Pioneer Village will be open inside the park all day. The Event is Free. Donations are always appreciated for continued operations of the park.

It's that time again—Mowing Season. Time to remove all old flowers from graves and headstones at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on Highway 724, Newburg. Donations are needed for the upkeep of the cemetery. If you have a loved one buried in this cemetery or want to help by contributing, please send contributions to: Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, 941 Highway 87, Russellville, AL, 35654.

Homecoming for Cherry Hill Baptist Church on Highway 244 in Russellville will be May 1. Preaching from the Porch (weather permitting), Dinner on the Grounds (weather permitting). Services canceled if raining. Everyone is invited!

The NACOLG Seniorx – Medicine program is a program for free and low-cost medications for the uninsured, underinsured, Medicare coverage gap or disability waiting period. For more information, contact NACOLG Seniorx today. There is no charge for this service. 1-800-AGELINE (1-800-243-5463) Paula Pardue 256-389-0529.

Pleasant Ridge Missionary Baptist Church #2 will hold Revival Monday-Wednesday, May 2,3,4, beginning nightly at 7 p.m. Evangelist is Bro. Roger Akers. Pastor Roger Bond and congregation invite everyone to attend. The church is located at 1570 Highway 48, Russellville.

Fr Franklin County Seekers of the Past will resume their quarterly meetings on Thursday, May 12, with a 5 p.m. meeting at the Franklin County Archives. Mary Carton will be the guest speaker with her program "Journey Down the Natchez Trace."

The Franklin County Cattleman's Association will hold a Steak Sandwich Sale on Friday, May 13, at the Franklin Shopping Center. Sales will begin at 9 a.m., and continue until sold out.

A Yard Sale to benefit the American Cancer Society Relay For Life will be held at South Side Baptist Church on Friday/Saturday, April 29/30, from 7 a.m.-2 p.m., each day. The church is located at 12215 Highway 43 South in Russellville.

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Bay Tree Council announces start of auditions for final season production

The Bay Tree Council for the Performing Arts in Red Bay announces auditions for its fourth and final production of the season, *Leading Ladies* by Ken Ludwig and directed by Mary Moore.

Auditions will take place at the Weatherford Centre in Red Bay on Sunday May 1, 2022 at 2:00 PM and Monday May 2, 2022 at 7:00 PM, and will consist of cold readings from the book. The play will be performed June 23-26, 2022. Tickets will go on sale Monday June 13, 2022 at the Weatherford Centre at only \$8.00 each. You may contact Beth Hammock for more information on tickets and groups who would like to attend at 256-668-0045.

The cast consists of three adult women and five adult men, while some parts can be cast with older teens. In this hilarious comedy by the author of *Lend Me A Tenor* and *Moon Over Buffalo*, two English Shakespearean actors, Jack and Leo, find themselves so down on their luck that they are performing

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SEE 'AUDITIONS,' page 8

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'Salute to Broadway' set for this weekend at Roxy

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

Russellville's historic Roxy Theatre will come to life Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday with the first annual Roxy's *Salute to Broadway*.

The show will feature songs from some of the most popular Broadway musicals.

Tickets are \$15 (orchestra) and \$10 (mezzanine) and will be available at the Roxy Box Office the day of the show. Show times are 7 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, with special matinee performances Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Enjoy a night of award-winning songs, music, costumes and dancing from Broadway classics.

The Roxy's *Salute to Broadway* will feature live musical performances by Tara Greenhill, Addyson Farris, Maddie Mouser, Kelly Baker, Simmie Grace Grimes, Zy Traywick, Jonathan Grimes, Elijah Racz, Dustin King, Amanda Mouser, Aleya Lane, Kandi Parker, Abigail King, Lydia Racz, Keylee Mayfield, Eli Mouser, Tucker King and Josh Lopez.

It's a night of spectacular music you won't want to miss!

'LETTER,' from page 4

two years, as well as producing two individual court state championships in doubles and two individual court runner-ups.

As all true great coaches are able to do, Coach Dollar is able to get more out of her players than anyone would ever think possible. And one other thing that is the mark of a great coach, Coach Dollar has sought the help of an outstanding VOLUNTEER assistant coach, LeAnn Strickland, who goes over and beyond what most paid coaches do to provide great advice and coaching to all of the girls as well. She and Coach

Strickland work together as a team better than any two coaches I've ever seen. As a parent of a Senior who has played her last match for Coach Dollar, I want to thank her for all she does for the girls and the tennis program at RHS. I also want to encourage parents of RHS middle school and high school students to consider letting your daughters play tennis at RHS. It is one of the best experiences your daughter will ever have.

Joey Rushing
Russellville

'AUDITIONS,' from page 7

"Scenes from Shakespeare" on the Moose Lodge circuit in the Amish country of Pennsylvania.

When they hear that an old lady in York, Pa., is about to die and leave her fortune to her two long lost English nephews, they resolve to pass themselves off as her beloved relatives and get the cash. The trouble is, when they get to York, they find out that the relatives aren't nephews, but nieces!

Romantic entanglements abound, especially when Leo falls head-over-pet-ticoat in love with the old lady's vivacious niece, Meg, who's engaged to the local minister. Meg knows that there's a wide world out there, but it's not until she meets "Maxine and Stephanie" that she finally gets a taste of it.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Roxy's *Salute to Broadway* show will feature songs from popular Broadway musicals and tickets are available at the Roxy box office.

Timber Creek Housing holds grand opening for Bear Creek facility

John Pilati
Franklin Free Press

As he addressed the 100 or so in attendance at the grand opening/ribbon cutting of Timber Creek Housing in Bear Creek, the smile on General Manager Todd Evans' face looked as wide as the Tennessee River.

Timber Creek Housing actually opened in August 2021, but the facility's owners and management chose not to hold a ribbon cutting in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, so they waited until April 20th.

"There have been a lot of people make this facility come together through a lot of hard work," Evans said.

Timber Creek Housing operates in the original Tidwell Manufacturing #2 location in Bear Creek. More recently, the facility housed Lil' Lodges, preceded by Marion and Crimson Homes.

A partnership team came together with Evans to find a facility to purchase or build to start the company. They found their location in November 2020, at the industrial facility located on County Highway 65 in Bear Creek. Adams, a co-owner of Timberline Construction Group in Birmingham, and Sullivan, owner of SLS Company in Galveston, Texas, own Timber Creek Housing.

After extensive renovations and additions, they rolled out the company's first manufactured home last August. Through March 2022, Timber Creek employees have constructed and sold more than \$20 million of products. Approximately 150 people are employed by Timber Creek and Evans said the company plans to hire 20-30 more in the next 60-90 days.

"There is a lot of history here and that means a lot to us. This facility has not been open since 2009. We redid the whole facility and were able to open last August," Evans said.

Evans is from Haleyville and his wife Heather is from Bear Creek, so Timber Creek's Bear Creek location was no coincidence.

"The big factor in Northwest Alabama was the work force. There is so much experience in building manufactured housing and there are a lot of suppliers within 15-20 miles of our location," Evans said.

Evans' professional experience in the industry includes employment at Cavalier Homes in Addison, Southern Energy Homes and Platinum Homes in Lynn.

Each of the company's four floor plans are named with homage to waterways. They include the Bear Creek, Buttahatchee, Chattahoochee and Sipsey models.

For more information on Timber Creek Housing, including applying for a job, visit www.timbercreekhousing.com.



PHOTO BY JOHN PILATI

After opening in August of 2021, Timber Creek Housing finally held a ribbon cutting ceremony last week at their Bear Creek facility.

Don't forget to visit us online at
www.franklinfreepress.net!

Contact us at 256-332-0255 or franklinfreepress@yahoo.com.

'RAISE,' from page 1

received from 2019-2021, although Canida has paid board members these bonuses dating back to 2013.

Alabama law provides for a four-year statute of limitations for ethics violations by public officials if the charge is a felony. If it is an unintentional violation, the statute of limitations is two years.

Franklin asked board members why they only returned bonuses from 2019, 2020 and 2021.

"Why did y'all pay back \$28,800? Why did what you paid back just go to 2019? Does it have something to do with the statute of limitations? Are you just trying to cover yourselves?," Franklin said, to no response from Canida or any board member.

Franklin also questioned Canida about why he felt it necessary to use ratepayer money to purchase luxury vehicles for himself.

"How do you justify purchasing luxury vehicles when they offer base models on most vehicles. I'm not just talking about the Denali, which you didn't even mention in your flyer," Franklin said.

In the REB's April mailer, sent to most ratepayers and signed by the Russellville Electric Board, board members described Canida's \$84,000 Yukon Denali as a "GMC," and asserted it was purchased for less than \$15,000.

Franklin asked why he was told the agenda was full when he first called to get on the April 19 meeting.

"Why did I get denied on my first call asking to be placed on the agenda?," Franklin asked, again to no response.

Franklin said he received a call the following week from Canida's Executive Assistant, Sherry Smith, telling him Canida was going to allow him to appear on the agenda after he was initially told he could not speak.

With only two other citizens speaking, and each limited to five minutes, Franklin raised the question of what constitutes a 'full' agenda.

After Russellville City Councilman Darren Woodruff posted a number of Canida's credit card expenses and monthly bills that were paid by the REB, questions arose about wasteful spending, including \$3,000 meals at beach conferences, and thousands of ratepayer dollars used by Canida to buy high-end pocket knives, gourmet chocolates, boutique purchases and a private fishing charter outing for board members and city council members at a cost of more than \$2,000.

"Why are you spending so much on excessive meals on these trips you take and getting a per diem that's supposed to cover things like that? It seems like there's some double dipping going on there," Franklin said.

Blackburn, who attended the board's March meeting, addressed board members and Canida about concerns he had from that meeting.

"I asked to speak to you at that meeting last month because my bill had more than doubled," Blackburn said. "That had never happened before. I was told it was very cold and that's why it happened. I guess hadn't been very cold before that. I don't know."

Public comments at the REB meeting are set as the last agenda item, so by the time Blackburn spoke, the board had already approved itself a 50% raise.

"After voting to approve a 3.1% rate increase in electricity, you voted for a raise for yourselves," Blackburn said. "We ratepayers are facing rising inflation every day, probably the worst in 20 years or so, so I don't believe now is a good time for the board to vote a raise, but I guess you've already done it."

"I don't understand that when you're asking for a rate increase from the people. The people of Franklin County, at least the majority of us, can't afford these kinds of bills we're getting but you voted yourselves a raise," he added.

Blackburn asked board members about when the oversized, glossy paper

mailer was written, approved by the board and when the vote to pay for the printing and postage was taken.

"Aren't things like this, the language, cost of printing, postage, supposed to be approved at your meetings in some kind of way with a vote?," Blackburn asked, with no response.

"You do know people in other counties received the mailer? I'm not sure how that happened but it did. If it was approved at a meeting, where was this meeting and was public notice given? It makes me wonder about the financial matters of this board and I think we need answers," he added.

Randolph asked Canida and the board why REB wasn't participating in the Tennessee Valley Authority's Energy Right Home Uplift Program, which offers eligible customers up to \$10,000 in free upgrades, appliances, windows/doors, etc., to allow for more energy efficiency.

"For some reason, Russellville Utilities is not in this program and I'd like to know why?," Randolph said. "Do you want to answer that now, or when I come back next month and get on the agenda again?"

"I'm not gonna stop researching. I just mailed something to the Board of Ethics in Montgomery and I want this whole ship sunk. It's ridiculous the people in this city suffer the way they do and you treat them the way you do. It's like we don't even have a voice," she added.

In other agenda items, the board:

—heard a report from Canida that the funds REB received as part of TVA's COVID-19 Community Care Fund will be used at Russellville Middle School. It's a \$5,000 grant with an additional \$5,000 by TVA, so that \$10,000 will be used for expenses to upgrade and improve the school's Science Department, according to RMS Principal Tony Bonds, who expressed his appreciation for the grant.

—heard a report from Canida that REB employees were working to assist with the installation of underground utilities at the new Dollar General location on Waterloo Road.

—heard a report from Canida on compensation amounts for board members of all Russellville municipal boards. Board of Education members received \$600/month, Civil Service Board members \$200/month, and Water and Sewer Board members receive \$400/monthly with the chairman receiving \$450. Russellville Gas Board members are compensated \$600/month with the chairman receiving \$750/month.

—approved a 'Performance and Incentive' bonus payment for all REB employees. Jackson made the motion to "approve the Performance and Incentive as we have done in the past."

When asked after the meeting how much each REB employee's 'Performance and Incentive' bonus would be, Jackson told the *FFP* he wasn't sure and directed the reporter to ask Canida, even though Jackson made the motion to begin with.

Canida was asked if it would be 1.5 weeks' pay, as has been the amount in the past, and he said he wasn't sure because it was "based on a formula," and he didn't yet know how much it would be.

Pursuant to his contract, Canida will also receive the 'Performance and Incentive' bonus. If based on 1.5 weeks' pay, Canida will receive a bonus of more than \$4,750, calculated on his \$165,000 base salary.

REB employees have received two annual 'Performance and Incentive' bonuses in recent years, so that would translate to more than \$9,500 additional income for Canida.

The next regular meeting of the Russellville Electric Board will be Tuesday, May 24, at 6 p.m.

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Sweep of Saks sends Phil Campbell to second round for sixth straight postseason

Staff reports

For the sixth time in the last six postseasons, Phil Campbell is headed to round two.

The Bobcats delivered a pair of early knockout blows on Friday against first-round opponent Saks, totaling 17 first-inning runs in two games on their way to routing the Wildcats 13-0 and 15-1.

Friday's sweep sets up a second-round showdown between Phil Campbell (25-6 and ranked No. 4 in Class 3A by the ASWA) and third-ranked Plainview (25-5).

The Bobcats got a dominant outing from ace Cam Habada in Friday's series opener. The senior lefty pitched around a hit and an error in the top of the first and then settled into a groove, striking out five consecutive batters in one early stretch.

Habada (9-1) finished with 11 strikeouts and just two walks in a one-hit shutout, reaching double-digit K's for the fifth time this season and raising his season strikeout total to 103 in 52.2 innings. He threw first-pitch strikes to 16 of the 20 batters he faced on Friday, and 52 of his 75 pitches were in the zone.

Phil Campbell gave Habada all the run support he would need (and then some) with nine runs in the bottom of the first. The Bobcats took advantage of three walks and then strung together six straight two-out hits, including two-run singles by Bryant Hyde and Jacob Barnwell and RBI singles by Sage Raper and Mason Swinney.

Phil Campbell added two more runs in the bottom of the third. Raper walked and scored on Habada's RBI triple, and Habada came home

See 'SWEEP,' page 13

Serving up success



COURTESY PHOTO

Carrying a perfect sectionals record into the state tournament, the Lady Golden Tigers tennis team managed to finish as the 4A/5A team runner up.

Brady Petree
Franklin Free Press

MOBILE - One of the most cliché sayings in sports is, "it takes a team effort to win". And for most sports, that might often be true.

But for a sport as individualized as tennis is, that isn't always the case.

However, for the Russellville Lady Golden Tiger tennis team, a team effort is exactly what was needed to lead Russellville to an incredibly successful trip through the state tournament last week.

Not only did Russellville bring home an overall class 4A/5A state runner-up trophy, but two members of the team, Leah Rushing and Madline Cooper, won a state title in the process.

Rushing and Cooper won the number three doubles court state championship to help lead the Lady Golden Tigers in the tournament alongside other veteran tennis players for the Golden Tigers.

"Those two have been playing tennis for several years but they have so many different irons in the fire at the same time. Whether they play basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, being in plays or whatever it is that they have going on, for them to push through and go to lessons and continue to work is a testament to their hard work," Dollar

said. "They played amazing through the season, through the section tournament and then in the state tournament, they played above and beyond themselves and I'm extremely proud of them."

Having half of the roster as seniors and the other half as sophomore poses some strengths and weaknesses for head coach Charlotte Dollar. But coaching a group with *this* amount of talent in it is certainly going to come with a lot more strengths than weaknesses.

"This is an amazing group of girls. They have worked hard all year and it has finally paid off. They love and support each other and that has carried them through all the rough spots this season," Dollar said.

In the tournament, Russellville performed extremely well across multiple fronts.

Players making it to the quarterfinals in singles were Peyton Parrish, Sofia Tiffin, Avary Miller, Addie Strickland and Kinsey Palmer. Natalie Busler made it to the semifinals in singles for Russellville.

On the number two doubles courts, Natalie Busler and Avary Miller made it to the semifinals and Peyton Parrish and Sofia Tiffin made it to the finals where they would finish as the runners-up.

Parrish had a phenomenal season as she would

See 'SUCCESS,' page 14

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'SWEEP,' from page 11

when Kyle Pace reached on an error to make it 11-0.

The Bobcats tacked on two more in the fourth, getting a single and a run scored from Barnwell and an RBI groundout from Raper to stretch the lead to 13-0.

Barnwell had a big game in the nine-hole, going 2-for-3 with two RBIs and two runs scored. Raper was 1-for-2 with two walks, two stolen bases, two RBIs and three runs

scored. Hyde was 1-for-2 with two RBIs and a run, and Bryant Anthony went 1-for-3 and scored twice.

Swinney was 1-for-3 with an RBI, a run and a stolen base, and Habada went 1-for-3 with an RBI triple and two runs scored. Cole Pace was 1-for-2 with a run, and Kyle Pace drove in one run and scored another.

The Bobcats busted loose with another monster first inning in game two, scoring eight times before Saks ever came to the plate. Anthony, the team's leadoff man, had two hits in the top of the first and finished the

game 4-for-5 with a triple and four RBIs. Phil Campbell also got two-run singles from Cole Pace and Barnwell in the big first inning.

Saks scored an unearned run in the bottom of the first, but the Bobcats added to their lead with three runs in the top of the fourth on an RBI groundout by Cole Pace and a two-run triple by Anthony. Phil Campbell finished off the scoring with a four-run fifth highlighted by RBI singles from Hunter Baker, Cole Pace and Anthony, opening up a 15-1 lead.

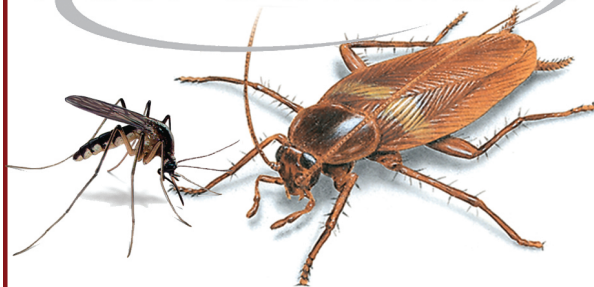
Cole Pace matched Anthony with four RBIs in game two and finished 2-for-3 with a walk and a stolen base. The senior right-hander also delivered his fourth complete game of the season on the mound, allowing just two hits in five innings. Pace (6-2) struck out eight and walked three, throwing 52 of his 84 pitches for strikes.

Anthony's four-hit game was his second of the season and the third of his varsity career. Baker went 2-for-3 with two RBIs and two runs scored, and Kyle Pace was 2-for-4 with a double, an RBI and two run scored.

Swinney went 1-for-3 with two walks and two runs, and Habada also walked twice and scored twice. Barnwell was 1-for-3 with two RBIs, and Hyde scored two runs and drove in another.

The Bobcats have won 11 straight games and 17 of their last 18 heading into next week's showdown with Plainview. The Bears swept Ohatchee 3-0 and 4-0 in their first-round series on Friday.

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'SUCCESS,' from page 11

manage to go through section play undefeated as Russellville's number one singles player. With wins over 6A and 7A schools alike such as Decatur, Jasper, Cullman, Muscle Shoals, Hartselle and Florence to name a few, Parrish's resume stacks up with just about anyone across the state.

One of her only two losses in the entire season came at the hands of Ava Thomason (whom Parrish would beat in a tournament later in the season) with the other coming against nationally-ranked Alana Boyce at the state tournament.

Coming into this season, expectations were understandably high. After all, the program had only graduated one senior the year prior and returned a steady roster with veterans.

While expectations can often vary from the start of the season to the finish, the Lady Golden Tigers ended up right where they hoped they would at the beginning of the year.

"We fully expected to have a really good team this year since we only lost one senior and we had a lot of kids put in a lot of work over the summer. And that came to fruition because we ended up going undefeated in section play and we scheduled a lot of teams in 6A and 7A to get us ready for a high level of competition and we played very well against those teams," Dollar said. "We won our section tournament with 52 points and the closest team behind us was Deshler with 32 points. So we had performed very well over the course of the season."

For those who are unaware, the state tournament in tennis is extremely different from say a state tournament for baseball, softball or other sports in the sense that you often know who your opponent is well ahead of time.

But for tennis, it's much, *much* different. Players' names in the tournament are essentially put into a hat and drawn at random. Meaning that one could match up with an average tennis player, or a nationally-ranked star. There is just so much unknown.

So for the Lady Golden Tigers to attend the state tournament in Mobile having no clue as to who they would for sure be matching up with and still perform at a high level speaks to how on-par Dollar and her coaching staff were with their expectations.

"We were really just hoping to go down there and make a good showing. Because when you go down there, you really don't know who you're going to draw in the tournament. So you're really just at the mercy of the draw," Dollar said. "When we got our draw, we had a lot of private schools in that first round and my heart kind of sank. Because typically the private schools are able to afford and spend more time on lessons and things like that so it's tough. But we went out there and competed with them and moved on to the next round and every round, someone kept winning and moving forward. We were really excited going in and we are really excited right now. Because to get second in a sport like tennis is really good because it's all just the luck of the draw."

Behind every successful team is someone oftentimes working in the background, helping out doing what they can to ensure success.

And for the Lady Golden Tigers tennis program, that person is assistant coach LeAnn Strickland.

"We are so blessed to have coach Strickland with us. She's worked with these girls for several years now and a lot of our success is due to the countless hours that she has volunteered and helped get these girls to where they are," Dollar said. "She works so hard with these girls and pushes them to be the best they can be. She is an excellent coach and we are so grateful to have her."

With this successful season in hand paired with multiple winning seasons in years past, the Russellville girls varsity tennis program has sneakily become one of the top tennis programs in northwest Alabama.

Despite losing four seniors at the conclusion of the school year, coach Dollar feels as though the Lady Golden Tigers are in a good place moving forward with the amount of experience combined with the young talent coming up through the system.

That combination is something that she hopes can keep the program at the high level that it is currently at.

"We have four seniors and four sophomores. So next year we are going to have a lot of juniors combined with younger players from JV. It's going to be hard to replace those seniors with that much experience and talent, so they are going to be missed but we know those sophomores are going to work really hard to make up for losing them so we are very excited on focusing on improving and keeping the program at the level it is at," Dollar said.

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